



Spring flowers are finally finding it safe to break out of their buds and show us their sweet little faces. It's going to be a busy weekend everywhere, and we will start the floral treasure hunt in Long Beach.



Get ready and GO to the annual Open House at [Prisk Native Garden](#) (a school garden) on either (or both) Sunday, April 8th or April 15th, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. It's that time in Spring when we get to celebrate the young students and parents who have worked to maintain the beauty and the spirit of native plant preservation at Prisk Native Garden which is a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat. Prisk, as all of California, received little seasonal rain this year. But they *do* have a hose and plenty of kids that like to squirt water at thirsty plants (and each other, probably). The result of all the water play (there is a lot of learning going on as well) is an explosion of color that begins in the desert section where you can find tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), desert bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), Western desert penstemon (*Penstemon incertus*), desert penstemon (*Penstemon pseudospectabilis*) and Palmer's penstemon (*Penstemon palmeri*). Other vibrant and showy perennials include woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), Eaton's penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*), lilac verbena (*Verbena lilacina*), prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*), monkeyflowers of many colors (*Diplacus* [*Mimulus*] spp. cultivars), and waves of pink coral bells (*Heuchera* 'Wendy' cultivar). Finally, canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*) brightens up the shady areas with spots of yellow. Don't forget to take "selfies" near the patches of blue Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), globe gilia

(*Gilia capitatum*) and yellow meadowfoam (*Limnanthes douglasii*). Finally, this garden is the only urban garden I know that can successfully grow the bright orange wind poppy (*Papaver heterophyllum*), the shy, but equally colorful cousin of our California poppy.



Prisk Native Garden. Photos by Mike Letteriello

Last week, we introduced you to the Colorado Lagoon in Long Beach. Well, it turns out there is another little gem nearby called Jack Dunster Marine Biological Reserve. It's a small, secluded jewel of coastal sage scrub habitat and a great example of wetland engineering for coastal habitat preservation. Species in bloom now include giant coreopsis (*Leptosyne gigantea*), beach evening-primrose (*Camissoniopsis cheiranthifolia*), chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Island snapdragon (*Galvezia speciosa*), several sage species (*Salvia* spp.), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), coast prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis*), and Catalina cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*). You may also see cliff swallows darting in and out of their mud nests near the marina. The Reserve is near the Long Beach Rowing Association's training facility.



Jack Dunster Marine Biological Reserve. Photo by George Nanoski.

The [Whiting Ranch Wilderness](#) in Lake Forest is an Orange County park with many natives now in bloom. Look for prickly phlox (*Linanthus californicus*), California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*), yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*), chaparral beardtongue (*Keckiella antirrhinoides*), California four o'clock (*Mirabilis laevis* var. *crassifolia*), woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), slender popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys tenellus*), wild Canterbury bells (*Phacelia minor*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), Catalina mariposa lily (*Calochortus catalinae*), bush monkeyflower (*Diplacus longiflorus* {*Mimulus aurantiacus*}), chaparral honeysuckle (*Lonicera interrupta*), Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*), prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia littoralis*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), stinging lupine (*Lupinus hirsutissimus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*), and cobweb thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*). Best places to see the most variety are Vulture View Trail, and Billy Goat Trail. Access via

Concourse Park in the city of Lake Forest. There is a kiosk with a map of the trail system.



Prickly phlox (*Linanthis californicus*), woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). Photos by George Nanoski.

Still quiet at the [Carrizo Plain National Monument](#). There are patches of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.) that can be spotted here and there. Not much else happening, but if you go, take a walk away from the car. Remember, last year it was the gold pot at the end of the rainbow. This year, it's a treasure hunt!

A couple of our most interesting flowering trees are now in bloom at [Placerita Canyon](#) Natural Area. The elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*) and flowering ash (*Fraxinus dipetela*). Many birds are eagerly awaiting these trees to produce their edible fruits. Yum! Our hardy chaparral shrubs like black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), and basket bush (*Rhus aromatica*) are beginning to break bud and flower. Some new beauties have popped up along the trails too, and include sun cups (*Camissoniopsis intermedia*), star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*) and fiddle neck (*Amsinckia* sp.) With many of the flowering natives still yet to come, Placerita will be a favorite visiting place for many months.

Reports from the [Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve SRA](#) are that the hills are mostly green with a variety of wildflowers sparsely dotting the landscape. There are a few scattered poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and "belly flowers" such as goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.), red maids (*Calandrinia menziesii*), slender keel fruit (*Tropidocarpum gracile*) and popcorn flowers (*Cryptantha* spp. and *Plagiobothrys* spp.) growing alongside the Poppy Trail South Loop and on the Tehachapi Vista Point.

The showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*), hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*) and tansy-leafed phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) at the [Environmental Nature Center](#) in Newport Beach are among the new blooms coming out for the first time this spring. They are joined by the showy, creamy white flowers of elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*). The lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*) serves as a pretty backdrop to red monkeyflower (*Diplacus puniceus* [*Mimulus aurantiacus* var. *puniceus*]) and chaparral mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*). The Island snapdragon (*Galvezia speciosa*), Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) and California flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum*) make a hot red and yellow splash of color, with thick leaved Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*) filling in with cool blue colors. Don't forget to seek out the fragrant wild mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*).

The native plant area at the [Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens](#) in San Marino is fantastic now. There are mallows of all kinds (*Sphaeralcea* spp.), many ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.), Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), deerweed (*Acemison glaber*), numerous buckwheats (*Eriogonum* spp.), dudleyas (*Dudleya* spp.), penstamons (*Penstemon* spp.), sages (*Salvia* spp.), and, of course, all the other gardens from around the world! The desert garden contains many native cacti and the Dr. Seussian boojum trees (*Fouquieria columnaris*) from Baja California! To be honest, it is deliriously overwhelming in the most wonderful of ways! Definitely worth your time to visit.



Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*). Photo by George Nanoski.

Drive a few miles east on the 210 from the Huntington to visit the other iconic Garden of Southern California—[Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden](#) in Claremont. Their wide swaths of Pacific coast irises (Pacific coast hybrids) are really nice with scattered patches of poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*). Monkeyflowers (*Diplacus* [*Mimulus*] spp. and cultivars) of all colors are coming into bloom along with coral bells (*Heuchera* cultivars), penstemons (*Penstemon* spp.), hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathaceae*) and other sages (*Salvia* spp.). While woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), California bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), cryptantha (*Cryptantha* sp.), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), flannel bush (*Fremontodendron californicum* and cultivars) and Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) are having their best show now, it's hard to compete for your attention with the gorgeous California wild lilacs (*Ceanothus* spp. and cultivars) taking in the sunny spotlight.

The [Elizabeth Learning Center](#) Habitat Gardens in Cudahy continues to impress visitors with an abundance of flowers! Most of the blooms can be seen from the sidewalk on Elizabeth Street in front of the campus without having to check in at the Main Office! The Desert Garden delights with prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*), pale sun-cup (*Camissoniopsis pallida*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), Spanish needle (*Palafoxia arida*), spotted eucrypta (*Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia*), desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), fish hook cactus (*Mammillaria dioica*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), chuparosa (*Justicia californica*), blue bells (*Phacelia campanularia*), bird's eye gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) and Coulter's lupine (*Lupinus sparsiflorus*). The Vernal Pool Garden contains Lindley's blazing star (*Mentzelia lindleyi*), globe gilia (*Gilia capitata*), truncate-leafed lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), and a beautiful blanket of goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata*). Some additional species in the Chaparral Garden include woolly Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja foliolosa*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), torn-leaf goldeneye (*Viguiera laciniata*), and Channel Island tree poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*). Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy.



Prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*). Photo by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on **Friday, April 13th** and check back each week for the most up to date information on southern and central California wildflowers.

NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS:

Theodore Payne Foundation

Fire-wise Garden Tour, co-hosted by Mountains Restoration Trust & Theodore Payne Foundation

Saturday, April 7, 10:00am-4:00pm

A self-driven journey to three fire-wise homes and native plant landscapes in Calabasas. Tickets: \$5 www.mountainstrust.org

Native Plant Symposium, Wildflower Show & Plant Sale

Saturday, April 7, 2018 - 9am-4pm

Sepulveda Garden Center

The Symposium features speakers, wild flower displays, and plant sales throughout the day. This is an annual event of the Los Angeles / Santa Monica Mountains chapter of CNPS with the Theodore Payne Foundation.

Full details at: <https://www.lasmmcnps.org/>

15th Annual Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour

A self-guided journey through 45 inspiring and beautiful gardens in LA County, each with at least 50% natives and including 19 new to the tour.

Saturday & Sunday, April 14 & 15, 2018, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Tickets On Sale Now

Full details at <http://theodorepayne.org/calendar/annual-garden-tour/>

Prisk Native Garden OPEN HOUSE

Open House is both Sunday, **April 8th**, and Sunday, April 15th, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Admission free. Donations accepted. No restrooms. Prisk Native Garden is on the grounds of Prisk Elementary School, 2375 Fanwood Ave., Long Beach, CA 90815. The Garden is around the corner from that address near the intersection of San Vicente and Los Arcos Streets. The Garden is also across the street from Stanford Middle School. Not wheelchair accessible. Take the Palo Verde turnoff off the 405 in Long Beach. Call Mike at 562-826-9266 for more info.

Caspers Wilderness Park

Adventure Day, April 7th.

Free admission and special displays and activities for the public.

www.ocparks.com/parks/ronald

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

Wildflower Walks

Weekends, March 24 through April 29.

Saturdays, 10 a.m. and Sundays, 1 p.m.

Guided walking tours with Garden nature interpreters featuring beautiful California wildflowers and seasonal highlights. Tours are approximately 60-90 minutes. Free with standard Garden admission. Tours depart from the admissions kiosk. www.rsabg.org

[Los Angeles County Natural History Museum](#)

SATURDAY STROLLS IN THE NATURE GARDENS

Sat. April 14 (second Saturdays, Feb.-July, 2018)

9:30-11 am

The theme will be plant selection and appreciation with an emphasis on attracting garden wildlife. Free with Museum entrance. Register via 213-763-3499 Nature Gardens Director, Carol Bornstein, will lead walks with a view to plant selection and wildlife attraction.

www.prisk-lbusd-ca.schoolloop.com/cms/section?d=x&group_id=1257795358223

<http://longbeach.gov/park/park-and-facilities/directory/jack-dunster-marine-biological-reserve>

<http://www.ocparks.com/parks/whiting/>

www.encenter.org

www.huntington.org

www.rsabg.org

www.theodorepayne.org